

ENHANCED ADHESION OF
POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE TO PAPERBOARD

This application claims the benefit of U. S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/429,322, filed November 27, 2002, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention is directed to providing enhanced adhesion of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resin to paperboard substrates to facilitate use of lower coatweights of the resin for providing a moisture barrier.

Currently, extrusion coatweights of 28 to 32 pounds per ream of polyethylene terephthalate resin are applied to bleached board grades for dual ovenable tray applications such as in connection with frozen food containers. In addition to higher manufacturing costs, heavy coatweights result in issues with die cutting and product formability. There is therefore a need to develop processes and/or materials to be able to lower the coatweight of extruded polyethylene terephthalate film while retaining its high adhesion to paperboard to fit the end-use performance requirements.

It is an advantage of this invention to provide a primer allowing lower polyester coatweights on paperboard.

It is another advantage of the invention to provide PET coated paperboard having improved die cutting and formability characteristics.

It is still another advantage of the invention to provide a primer for improved adhesion enhancement of PET to the felt side of clay coated paperboard.

These other advantages of the invention will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art after reading the following description of the invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a primer emulsion chemistry yielding excellent adhesion of polyethylene terephthalate resin to clay coated paperboard (with relatively high starch content) at much reduced coatweights of the resin. The primer used for adhesion enhancement is an ammonium chloride catalyzed, self-crosslinking copolymer of ethylene-vinyl acetate with N-methylol acryl amide functional groups attached to a polymer backbone. The use of the primer facilitates use of PET coatweights of as low as about 10-12 pounds per ream (and lower for some applications).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention enables the use of lower coatweights for adhesion to dual ovenable trays and the like and thereby lowers costs for a product that converts easily on existing equipment.

The invention makes use of a primer emulsion for adhering coatweights of polyethylene terephthalate as low as about 12 pounds per ream to clay coated board with high starch, (basis weight of 199 lbs/ream) and coatweights of as low as about 10 pounds per ream of polyethylene terephthalate for non-clay-coated board with a basis weight of 282 lbs/ream. The adhesive primer has a dry weight of up to about 0.5 pounds per ream.

The end product exhibited adhesion measured with 180° peel strength over 600 grams per inch (g/in) under TAPPI conditions and over 800 g/in at high temperature and humidity. This was an unexpected result when using an adhesive primer in such low quantities, especially for clay coated board with a starch content ranging from 25-40 pounds per ton which interferes with polyethylene terephthalate adhesion to the board substrate.

This discovery enables a blister free product when an empty converted tray is subjected to high temperatures at 400° F - 420° F for up to half an hour and for a food filled tray for up to one hour in a convection oven or on high power for five minutes in a microwave oven.

Extrudable coated paperboard for dual ovenable tray applications can be produced with a low coatweight extruded polyester coating. The extrusion is conducted using an Er-WE-Pa extrusion line at a speed ranging, for example, between about 800 and 1200 feet per minute over primed paperboard with and without the use of a flame treater.

A preferred primer used for adhesion enhancement is an ammonium chloride catalyzed, self-crosslinking copolymer of ethylene-vinyl acetate with N-methylol acryl amide functional groups attached to a polymer backbone. The primer is applied in line with extrusion at coatweights of as low as 0.1-0.5 pounds per ream. Functional structures with polyethylene terephthalate resin coatweights ranging from 12 to 18 lbs/ream can be obtained. Polyethylene terephthalate with coatweights lower than 10 lbs/ream can be used to adhere to paper with priming. In certain applications, these coatweights may be too low, but they can be obtained with the unique primer formulation for applications such as non clay coated board. Misting and flame treatment optionally can be used with the primer. Optionally, misting with water is applied to the board prior to primer application in line with the extrusion process at the rate of 0.01 to 0.1 lbs/ream without sacrificing adhesion. The primer preferably is applied by gravure cylinder followed up by hot air drying.

A variation of the invention comprises using a polyethylene terephthalate coextrusion with epoxy modified polyolefin tie resins. Other variations and modifications will be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the scope of the invention. The invention encompasses such variations and modifications.